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HOUSE RESOLUTION 377
By Odom

A RESOLUTION to urge Congress to adopt legislation requiring the Medicare program to cover all oral anti-cancer drugs.

WHEREAS, cancer is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the State of Tennessee and throughout the Nation; and

WHEREAS, it is disproportionately a disease of the elderly, with more than half of all cancer diagnoses occurring in persons age 65 or older, who are thus dependent on the federal Medicare program for provision of cancer care; and

WHEREAS, treatment with anti-cancer drugs is the cornerstone of modern cancer care, elderly cancer patients must have access to potentially life-extending drug therapy, but the Medicare program's coverage of drugs is limited to injectable drugs or oral drugs that have an ingestable version; and

WHEREAS, the Nation's investment in biomedical research has begun to bear fruit with a compelling array of new oral anti-cancer drugs that are less toxic, more effective and more

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cost-effective than existing therapies but, because such drugs do not have an injectable equivalent, are not covered by Medicare; and

WHEREAS, non-coverage of these important new products leaves many Medicare beneficiaries confronting the choice of either substantial out-of-pocket personal costs or selection of more toxic, less effective treatments that are covered by the program; and

WHEREAS, the failure of Medicare to cover oral anti-cancer drugs leaves many beneficiaries suffering from blood-related cancers such as leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma, as well as cancers of the breast, lung and prostate at risk; and

WHEREAS, certain members of the United States Congress have recognized the necessity of Medicare coverage for all oral anti-cancer drugs and have introduced legislation in the 107th Congress to achieve that result (H.R. 1624; S. 913); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That the United States Congress is hereby urged to adopt legislation requiring the Medicare program to cover all oral anti-cancer drugs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the members of the Tennessee delegation of the United States Congress, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.